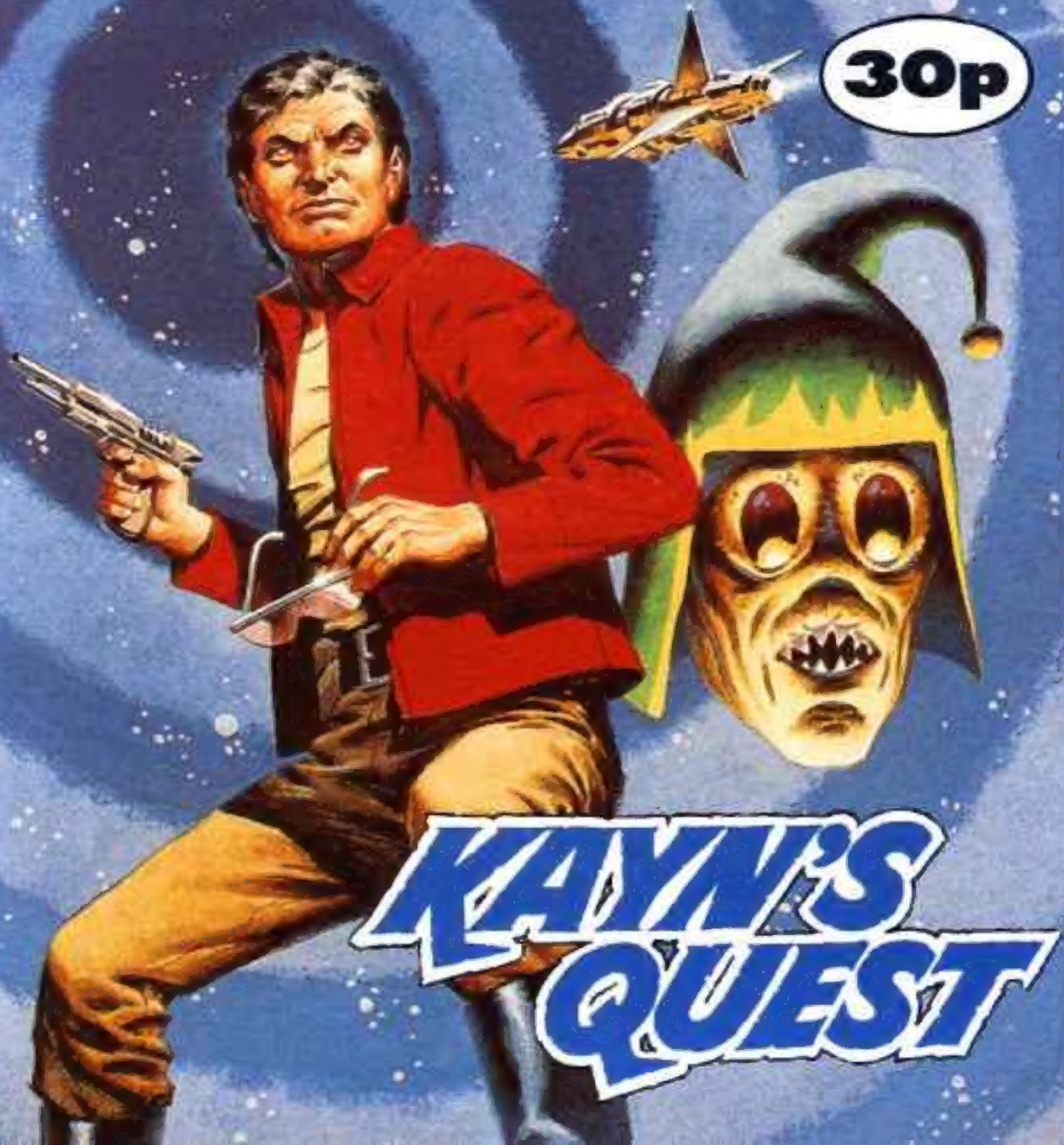


# STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES

No. 247

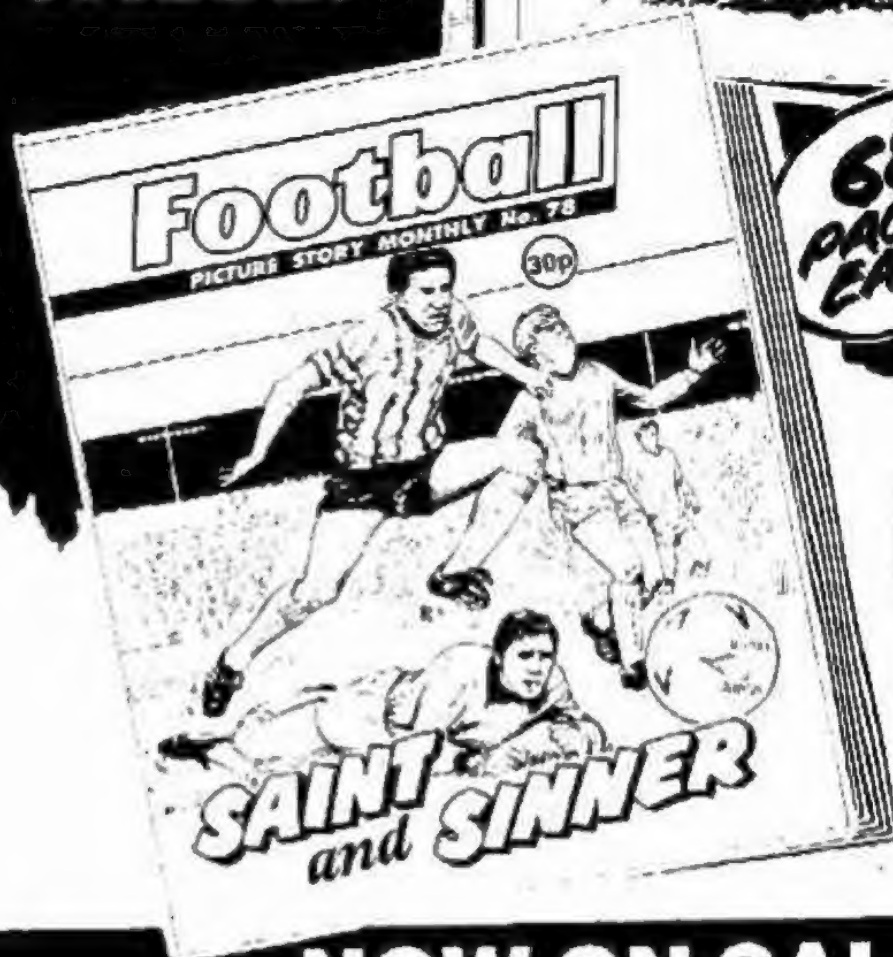
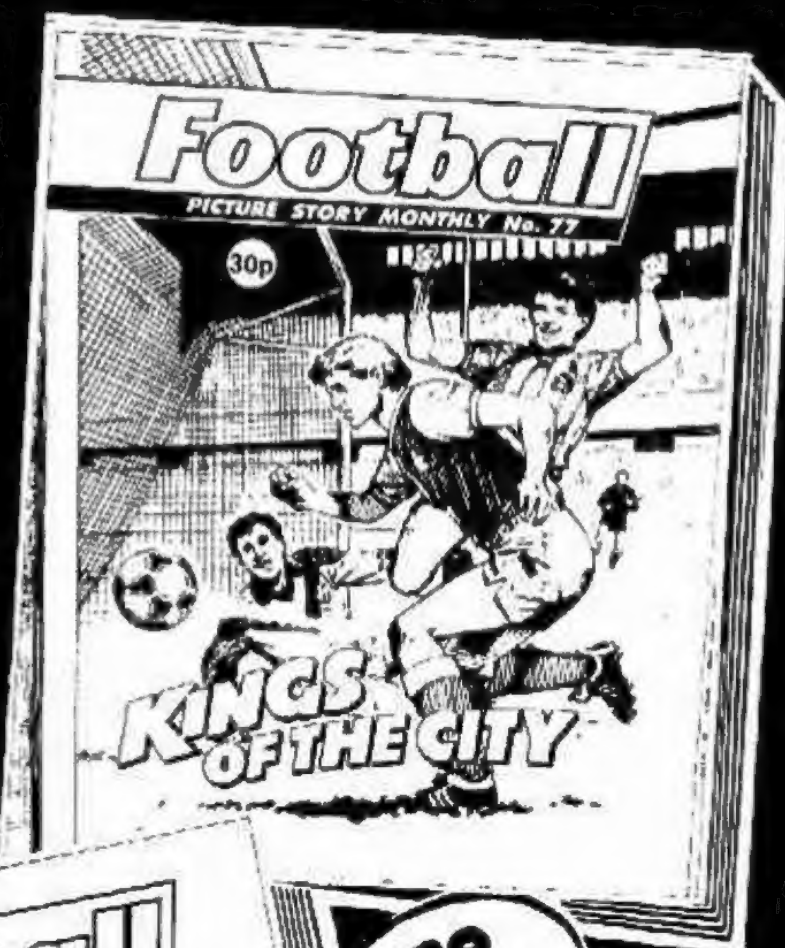
30p



## KAYN'S QUEST



**IF YOU'RE  
A  
FOOTBALL  
FAN, YOU  
CAN'T  
AFFORD  
TO MISS  
THESE!**



**68  
PAGES  
EACH**

**FOOTBALL  
LIBRARIES  
Nos. 77+78**

**NOW ON SALE**

**30p**

# Kayn's Quest



WEST EARTH UNIVERSITY, NEW  
MOSCOW, HALF PAST TWO IN  
THE MORNING.

4  
DESPITE THE HOUR, PROFESSOR LINDEN WAS ENGROSSSED WITH HIS RESEARCH OF ANCIENT ALIEN CIVILISATIONS, DEEP INSIDE THE XENO-HISTORY DEPARTMENT.

HOW FASCINATING! THE CRYSTALLINE STRUCTURE BEARS AN UNCANNY RESEMBLANCE TO MICRO-CIRCUITRY!



BUT THE PROFESSOR WASN'T THE ONLY LATE WORKER ON THE PREMISES—

OKAY, PROF! WHERE'S THE STUFF FROM THE CHASFAN DIG?

NO! I'M STILL WORKING ON THAT! GET OUT — BEFORE I CALL A GUARD!







THEIR SHIP BLASTED AWAY, LEAVING THE STRICKEN UNIVERSITY MORE LIKE A MORGUE.



ON GOOD DAYS I'M A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR, CALLED MIKAL R. KAYN, ON BAD DAYS I WONDER HOW TO PAY MY RENT ... AND MY NAME'S STILL MIKAL R. KAYN.

OKAY, COMPUTER —  
TWIST!

TEN OF SPADES!  
THAT MAKES  
TWENTY-FOUR,  
KAYN — YOU'RE  
BUST!



THAT'S THE  
EIGHTEENTH HAND  
YOU'VE WON! WHY,  
HELLO — COME IN!


YOU ARE MIKAL KAYN, THE  
PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR?

I RECOGNISED THE ALIEN AS A DYADASSI,  
AND THEY ALWAYS — BUT ALWAYS —  
TRAVEL IN PAIRS. AND I WAS CURIOUS ...  
HE WAS ALONE.









I NORMALLY EXPECT TO GET AT LEAST THREE THOUSAND A DAY PLUS EXPENSES, MR — WHATEVER YOUR NAME IS. FINDING THIS BONDMATE COULD END UP COSTING YOU A FAIR AMOUNT.

MY NAME IS ORFA'MM, MR KAYN, AND I REGRET I ONLY HAVE TWENTY-FIVE CREDITS. BUT I AM DESPERATE! BOND-LINKS ARE SO STRONG THAT SHOULD ONE MATE DIE, THE OTHER WILL FOLLOW IN THIRTY-SIX HOURS! IT HAS BEEN TEN HOURS SINCE I LOST CONTACT WITH ORI'MM, AND I FEAR THE WORST!

I ALMOST WINCED: A LOUSY QUARTER C-NOTE! I SHOULD HAVE THROWN ORFA'MM OUT — BUT HE MIGHT ONLY HAVE TWENTY-SIX HOURS TO LIVE. HE'D SUCKERED ME.

I'D LIKE TO HELP, MR ORFA'MM, BUT TWENTY-FIVE CREDITS DOESN'T TICKLE MY FANCY.

EVEN IF I TOLD YOU THAT I KNOW ORI'MM IS SOMEHOW INVOLVED WITH A LIGNAZ GROSSE?

THAT TICKLED MY FANCY. THAT NAME DREW ME RIGHT IN. LIGNAZ GROSSE WAS THE SORT OF THING YOU'D NEVER FIND UNDER ANY SELF-RESPECTING STONE — AND I HAD MORE THAN ONE SCORE TO SETTLE WITH HIM.



OKAY, ORFA'MM —  
I'LL ASK AROUND.  
CALL BACK IN AN  
HOUR!

THANK YOU, MR KAYN. I AM  
ETERNALLY GRATEFUL TO  
YOU.

AT THOSE RATES, I GUESS HE WAS, TOO.

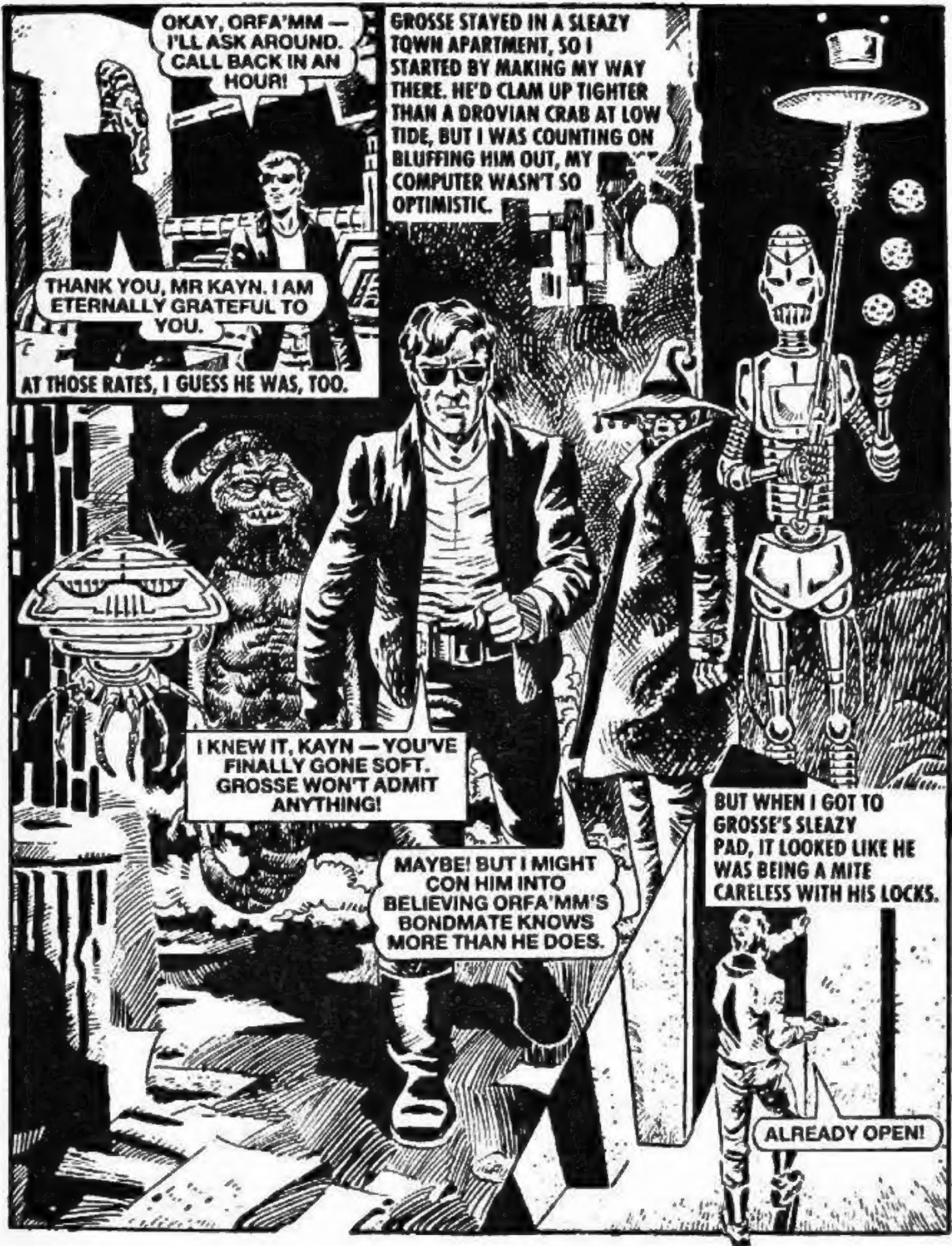
GROSSE STAYED IN A SLEAZY  
TOWN APARTMENT, SO I  
STARTED BY MAKING MY WAY  
THERE. HE'D CLAM UP TIGHTER  
THAN A DROVIAN CRAB AT LOW  
TIDE, BUT I WAS COUNTING ON  
BLUFFING HIM OUT, MY  
COMPUTER WASN'T SO  
OPTIMISTIC.

I KNEW IT, KAYN — YOU'VE  
FINALLY GONE SOFT.  
GROSSE WON'T ADMIT  
ANYTHING!

MAYBE! BUT I MIGHT  
CON HIM INTO  
BELIEVING ORFA'MM'S  
BONDMADE KNOWS  
MORE THAN HE DOES.

BUT WHEN I GOT TO  
GROSSE'S SLEAZY  
PAD, IT LOOKED LIKE HE  
WAS BEING A MITE  
CARELESS WITH HIS LOCKS.


ALREADY OPEN!






AT TIMES LIKE THIS, I'M  
ALMOST GLAD I CAN ONLY  
SEE IN INFRA-RED WITHOUT  
MY SHADES.

INSIDE THE LIGHTS WERE OFF, AND I HAD NO  
IDEA WHERE THE SWITCH WAS — BUT THAT  
POSED NO PROBLEMS FOR ME.



NO AMATEUR DID THIS!  
STABBED TO DEATH BY A  
VIBRO-KNIFE! BUT THE  
QUESTION IS — WHO IS HE?  
AND WHAT'S HIS CORPSE  
DOING IN GROSSE'S  
APARTMENT.



TOO MUCH TO EXPECT  
GROSSE KILLED HIM, I  
SUPPOSE?





YOU DON'T MESS ON YOUR  
OWN DOORSTEP —

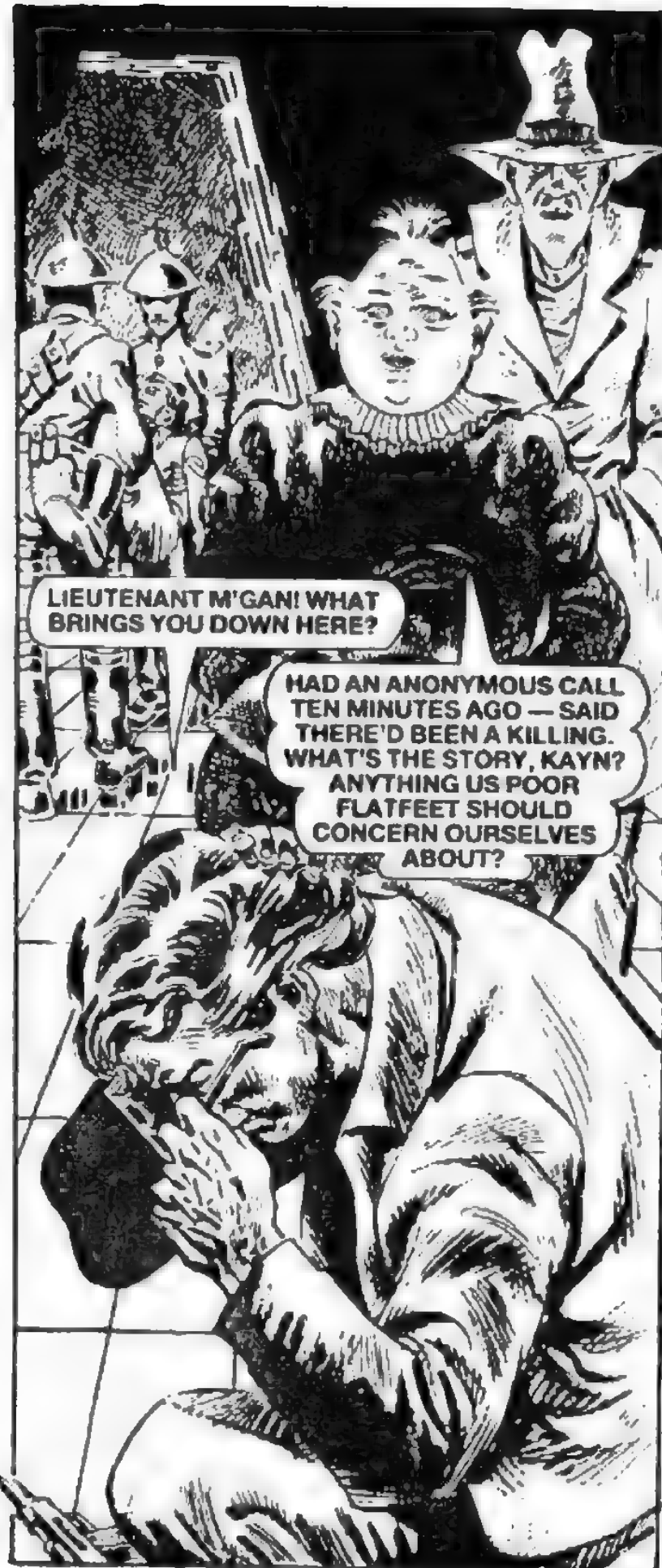
AND THAT'S WHEN  
THE GALAXY EXPLODED.



WHEN THE WORLD FINALLY CAME BACK, THERE  
WERE TWO UGLY FACES PEERING AT ME.

FEELING BETTER, KAYN?

MAYBE HE BETTER  
TAKE A TRIP  
DOWNTOWN,  
LIEUTENANT — HAVE  
HIS BUMPS READ?







BACK AT THE OFFICE, I KEPT MYSELF BUSY WHILST WAITING FOR ORFA'MM TO RETURN.



THE DEAD MAN WAS TOMOZ MORDEN — IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE GANG WHO ROBBED THE WEST EARTH UNIVERSITY OF THE CHASFAN RELICS A FEW HOURS AGO. HE LIFTED HIS MASK DURING THE RAID, AND THE SECURITY CAMERAS PICKED HIM OUT.



AN HOUR LATER ORFA'MM WALKED INTO MY OFFICE — AND A LITTLE SURPRISE.


NICE TO SEE YOU, MR ORFA'MM. HERE'S YOUR TWENTY-FIVE CRED'S BACK — CLOSE THE DOOR ON YOUR WAY OUT!

WHAT? I DON'T UNDERSTAND, MR KAYN — IS THERE A PROBLEM?

I HAD A LITTLE STORY, SO I TOSSED IT IN ORFA'MM'S DIRECTION.

YOU FAILED TO MENTION THAT YOUR BONDMADE WAS INVOLVED WITH A GANG WHO STOLE CHASFAN RELICS FROM THE DYADASSI HOME PLANET. NOW THE ONLY MEMBER OF THAT GANG TO BE IDENTIFIED IS DEAD — MURDERED AND I THINK YOU'D BETTER START LEVELLING WITH ME, OR TAKE A WALK.






I THINK THE GANG WERE AFTER THE MOLFAAN. LEGEND HAS IT THAT A LOST CIVILISATION ON CHASFAN FILLED THE MOLFAAN WITH THEIR ENTIRE KNOWLEDGE, AND THAT A DYADASSI COULD TUNE HIMSELF TO THE DEVICE IN THE SAME WAY AS BOND MATING IS ACHIEVED. FEW BELIEVE THE LEGEND.

THAT'S LEVEL ENOUGH! I WISH YOU'D TOLD ME ALL THIS EARLIER, ORFA'MM — IT MIGHT HAVE HELPED. NOW — HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT A LITTLE SPACE TRIP?

YOU'VE LOST ME AGAIN, MR KAYN. TO WHERE?



TO CHASFAN. I'VE JUST HAD THIS URGE TO GO POKING AROUND THE RUINS.

I WAS PRETTY SURE THERE WAS AN  
OVERACTIVE PAIR OF EARS  
SOMEWHERE.



... POKING AROUND THE RUINS.

BLAST OFF WAS SUCCESSFUL. IT WAS  
GETTING TO CHASFAN AND BACK SAFELY  
THAT BUGGED ME MOST.



OKAY, COMPUTER. LAY  
IN A COURSE FOR  
CHASFAN, AND DON'T  
SPARE THE LIGHT-  
YEARS.

PLEASE, KAYN —  
LAY OFF THE HUMOUR.

THE DYADASSI SEEMED RESTLESS.

RELAX, ORFA'MM — WE'RE  
ONLY POPPING HOME,  
AFTER ALL.

IT'S NOT THAT, MR KAYN.  
BUT YOU SEE, WITH OUR  
UNIQUE EMPATHIC  
TRAITS...





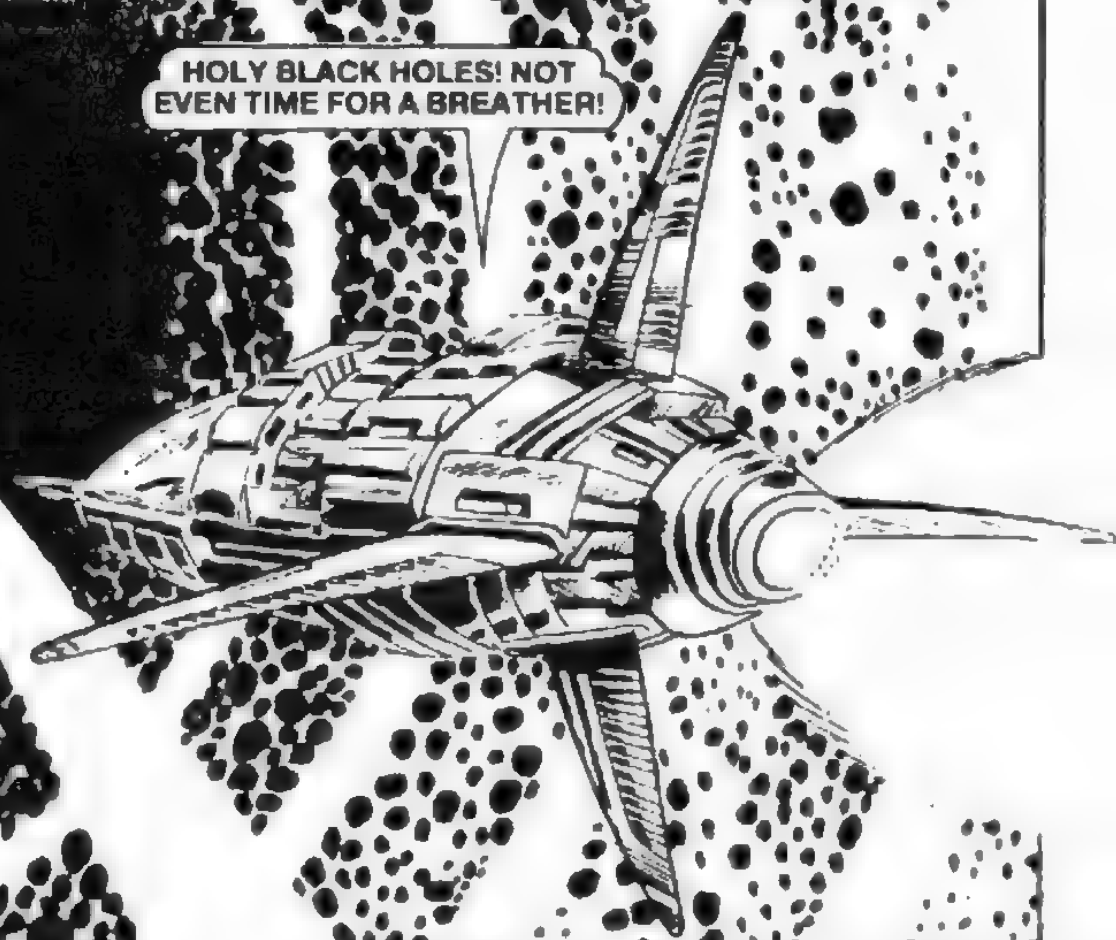
... DYADASSI HATE  
TRAVELLING THROUGH  
HYPERSPACE!

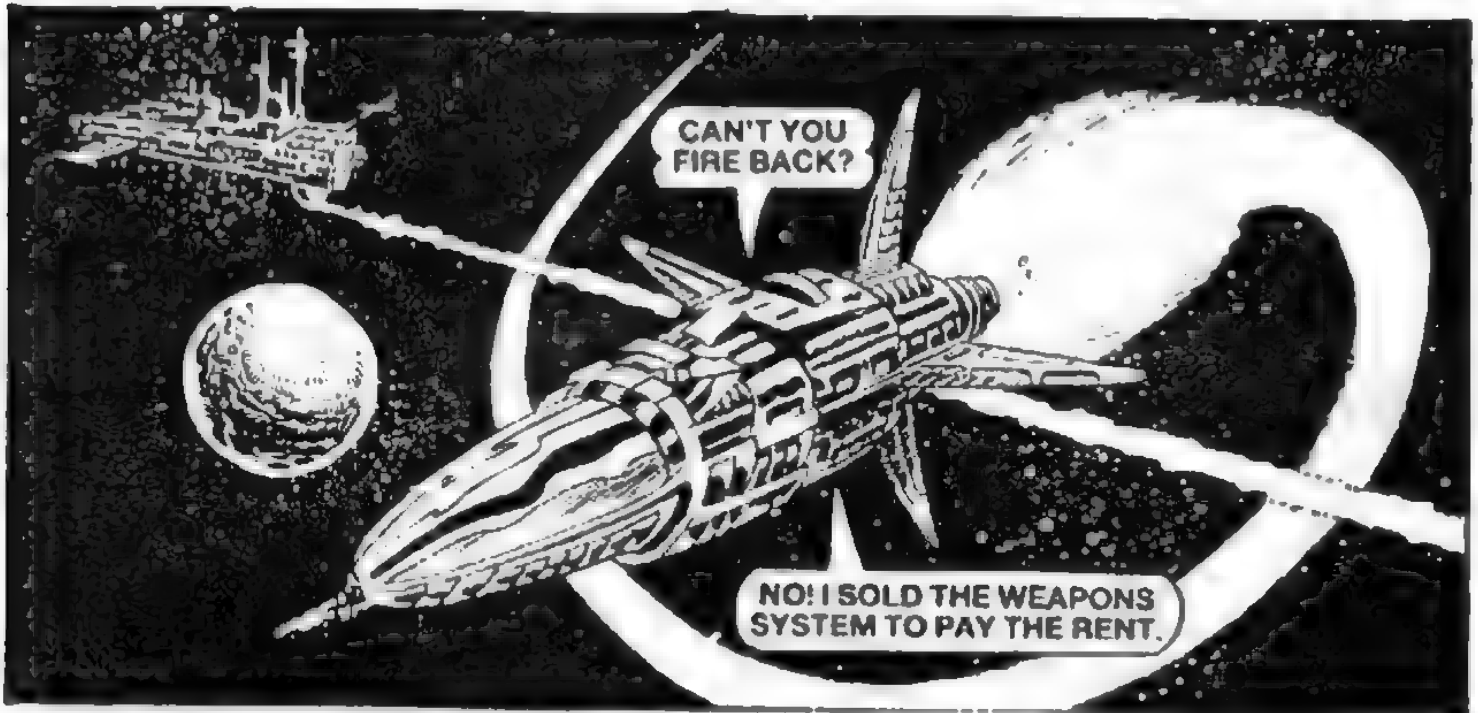


BUT IT WAS TOO LATE FOR PROTESTS. THE  
COMPUTER AUTOMATICALLY CLICKED ON THE  
HYPERDRIVE, AND WE WERE HURLING  
THROUGH THAT NEVER-NEVER LAND OUTSIDE  
SPACE AND TIME.

WE POPPED BACK INTO NORMAL SPACE  
A COUPLE OF LIGHT-HOURS FROM  
CHASFAN, AND CAME UNDER ATTACK.

HOLY BLACK HOLES! NOT  
EVEN TIME FOR A BREATHER!







AND AS I'D GUESSED, OUR WELCOMING COMMITTEE TURNED AND LEFT.

WHAT'S TO STOP HIM GETTING US ON THE WAY BACK?

I'VE A HUNCH WE'LL BE SAFE ENOUGH UNTIL WE GET BACK TO EARTH.

ONCE DOWN ON CHASFAN, I BEGAN TO SEE WHERE THE DYADASSI PRE-OCCUPATION WITH TWOS CAME FROM. THE WHOLE PLANET WAS IN LOVE WITH TWINS.

IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK, EVEN UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.

MAYBE YOU THINK SO. I'M BEGINNING TO FEEL CROSS-EYED.





I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WAS EXPECTING, BUT ALL I GOT WAS SAND IN MY FACE.

COUGH!  
WHAT THE ... ?

TWO DYADASSI STOOD THERE,  
WEARING CLOTHING IN A STYLE I  
HADN'T SEEN OUTSIDE A MUSEUM.

OFF-WORLDER — WHAT  
ARE YOU DOING HERE  
ON THE SITE OF OUR  
HOLY FOREBEARS?

AND WITH AN  
UNBONDED ONE! FOR  
SHAME, HALF-  
CREATURE! YOU  
SHOULD KNOW  
BETTER!

THERE'S BEEN A  
THEFT OF ANCIENT  
CHASFAN RELICS  
ON EARTH. I'M  
HERE TO  
INVESTIGATE.

THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE,  
OFF-WORLDER! NO  
RELICS HAVE EVER  
LEFT CHASFAN! AND  
NOR WILL THEY!

MAYBE IT WAS MY DAY FOR  
SURPRISES — I'D CHECK MY  
HOROSCOPE LATER — BUT  
THAT REALLY THREW ME.

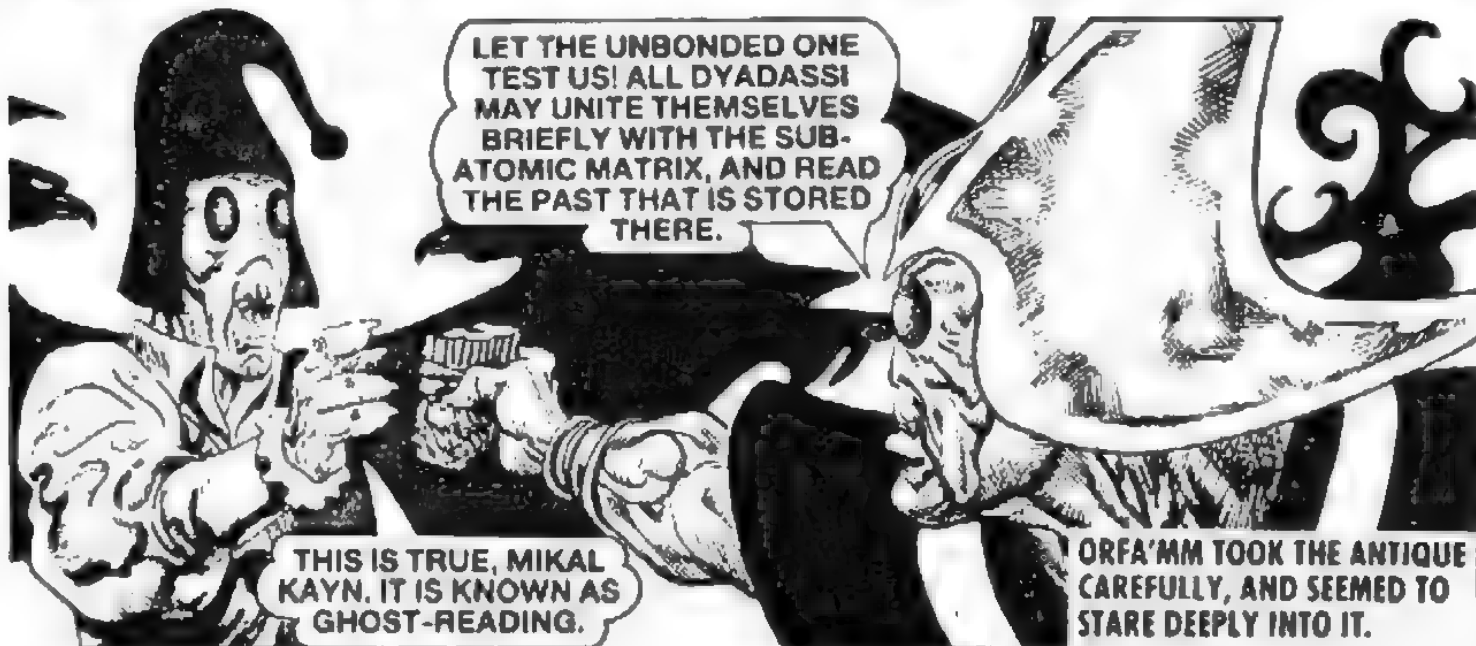




THINGS HAVE OBVIOUSLY  
CHANGED SINCE I LEFT  
CHASFAN. THERE HAVE  
ALWAYS BEEN GROUPS  
OPPOSED TO SHARING OUR  
PAST WITH ANY OUTSIDE  
THE DYADASSI BOND-  
CADRE, BUT THESE SEEM  
MORE EXTREME THAN  
MOST.



BEHOLD THE  
TABERNACLE OF  
HERITAGE, HOME FOR  
THE CHASFAN  
ARTEFACTS YOU OFF-  
WORLDERS WOULD  
OTHERWISE PLUNDER.





BY THE MOLFAAN! THE  
WEIGHT OF ALL THOSE  
EONS! I CAN  
SEE THE PAST!

I HAD NO IDEA WHAT ORFA'MM WAS SEEING, BUT BY HIS EXPRESSION I FIGURED  
WHATEVER THE OBJECT WAS, IT WAS GENUINE.



ORFA'MM HANDED THE OBJECT BACK, LOOKING LIKE HE'D JUST BEEN RUN OVER BY A SPACE-FREIGHTER.

THERE CAN BE NO MISTAKE, MIKAL KAYN — THESE ARE THE REAL THING.

WELL THEN, WE'LL POP BACK TO EARTH AND TELL THEM NOT TO WORRY!

ON THE CONTRARY, OFF-WORLDER — WE CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO GO SPREADING THE TRUTH, ELSE YOUR PRYING ARCHAEOLOGISTS WOULD BE BACK. WE WILL GO TO ANY LENGTHS TO KEEP OUR TREASURES SECRET!

WE WERE LED OFF ACROSS THE DRY LANDSCAPE, TO HEAVEN KNOWS WHERE.

COMPUTER! I HOPE YOU'VE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION RECENTLY!


OH, I WONDERED WHEN YOU WERE GOING TO GET AROUND TO ME! YES — I'VE BEEN MONITORING THE INFRA-FREQUENCIES DYADASSI USE FOR SOME OF THE EMPATHY-LINKING.

THE COMPUTER OFTEN SPOKE TO ME IN A CONSPIRATORIAL WHISPER... THAT'LL TEACH ME TO BUY ONE SECOND-HAND FROM A DEFUNCT DRAMA SCHOOL.




AND?


I THINK I CAN GENERATE A BRIEF  
INTERFERENCE PATTERN THAT  
WILL MAKE THINGS INTERESTING  
YOUR FRIEND ORFA'MM WILL END  
UP WITH A PLANET-SIZED  
HEADACHE, THOUGH



THEN DO IT! COME ON,  
ORFA'MM — WHILE YOU  
STILL CAN!



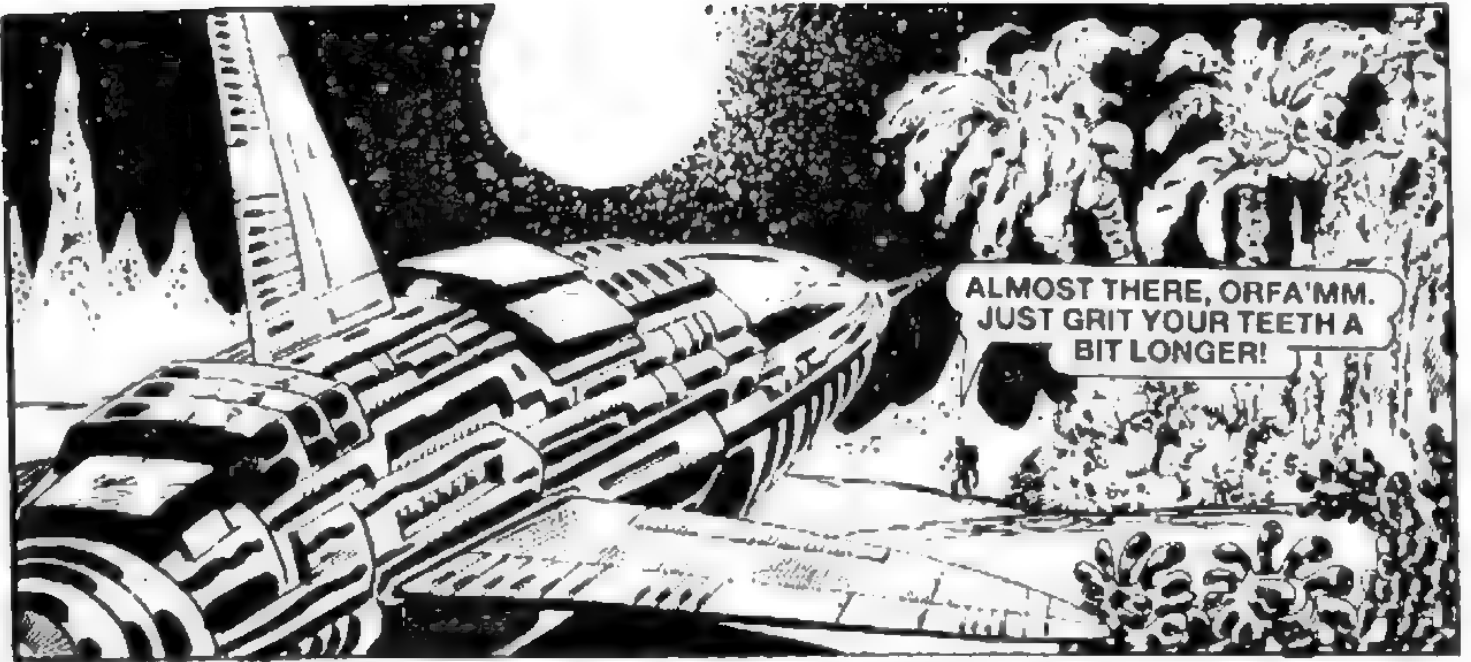
MIKAL KAYN —  
WHAT ARE YOU ... ?



I DIDN'T WASTE TIME WITH A REPLY —  
JUST SILENTLY PRAYED I COULD CARRY  
THE TALL ALIEN ONCE THE COMPUTER'S  
ATTACK STARTED.








WE FIRED TOGETHER, BUT I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHOSE HANDS WEREN'T SHAKING WITH MENTAL AGONY.

I DON'T KNOW HOW I'M GOING TO EXPLAIN THIS TO THE INTERPLANETARY COMMISSION!

THAT'S NEVER BOTHERED YOU BEFORE.


THE JOURNEY BACK TO EARTH WAS MADE WITHOUT FURTHER MISHAP. BUT SOMEHOW THAT JUST MADE ME MORE NERVOUS. I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT WHOEVER HAD BEEN WATCHING ME WOULD LET ANOTHER CHANCE FOR TARGET PRACTICE GO SO EASILY.



BY THE TIME WE WERE BACK AT MY OFFICE, ORFA'MM WAS GETTING BETTER, BUT STILL GROGGY. INSIDE THERE WAS SOMEONE WHO MADE ME FEEL MUCH THE SAME.

WELL, WELL —  
SERGEANT WATHAN!  
HOMICIDE GIVING  
LESSONS IN HOUSE-  
BREAKING THESE  
DAYS?


YOU'VE BEEN A BAD BOY,  
KAYN — YOU SKIPPED THE  
PLANET WHILST AN  
INVESTIGATION WAS STILL  
IN PROGRESS. M'GAN IS  
NOT HAPPY.



I DOUBT M'GAN GIVES A JOT  
WHERE I AM. BESIDES, MY FRIEND  
HERE WANTED A QUICK TOUR OF  
THE NEAREST PLANET.

ALL THE WAY TO CHASFAN AND  
BACK FOR A TOUR? LOOKS TO  
ME LIKE HE COULD DO WITH  
ANOTHER LONG VOYAGE —  
TAKE THE AIR, SOMEWHERE A  
LOT HEALTHIER THAN AROUND  
HERE.

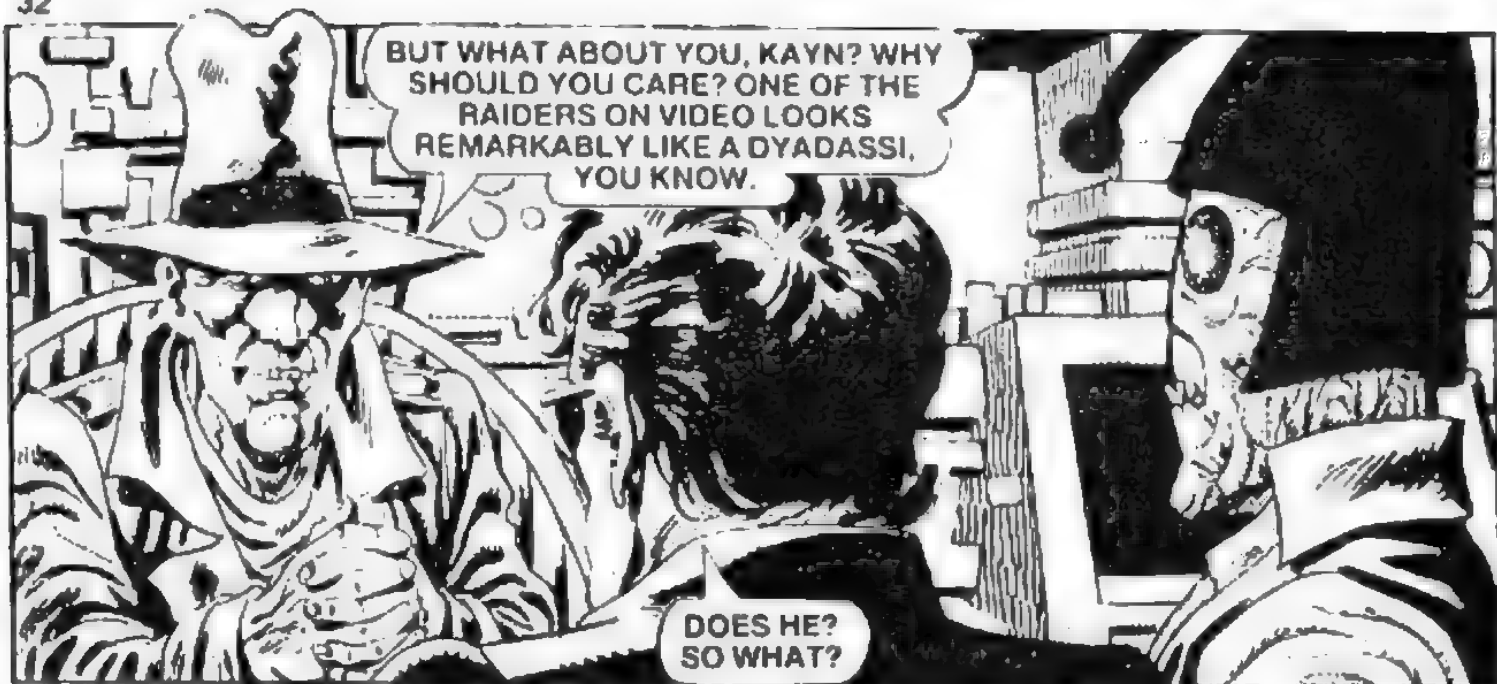
I WONDERED HOW WATHAN KNEW  
WHERE WE'D BEEN, BUT LET IT PASS.




SO WHAT'S THE NEWS ON THE  
TOMMOZ MORDEN KILLING,  
SERGEANT? BEATEN OUT ANY  
CONFESSIONS YET?

WE FIGURE MORDEN GOT  
KILLED BECAUSE HE WAS  
SEEN. GROSSE IS IN IT OVER  
HIS EAR-LOBES  
SOMEWHERE, BUT THERE'S  
NO WAY WE CAN PROVE A  
THING.







YOU HEARD WHAT HE SAID?  
ONE OF THE UNIVERSITY  
RAIDERS WAS A DYADASSI! IT  
MUST BE ORI'MM!


MAYBE! BUT I WANT TO  
KNOW THE  
CONNECTION BETWEEN  
THE THEFT, MORDEN'S  
DEATH, AND THOSE  
DYADASSI ON  
CHASFAN. THERE IS  
ONE, I'M SURE.

IF STOLEN PROPERTY IS YOUR THING, OR IF  
YOU'VE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING SAME,  
THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE TO GO ...

... QUENNA'S SLEAZE EMPORIUM.

WARP OUT, KAYN!  
WHATEVER YOU'VE GOT, I  
DON'T WANT IT, OR IF YOU  
WANT IT, I AIN'T GOT IT!

NOW IS THAT ANY WAY TO  
TALK TO SOMEONE WHO  
COULD JUST SAVE YOUR  
SHRINK-FITTED SKIN?



WEST EARTH UNIVERSITY GOT TURNED OVER LAST NIGHT, QUENNA — SOME VALUABLE ANTIQUES LIFTED. YOU WOULDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THEM, I SUPPOSE?

NOT A THING... I'VE GOT RECEIPTS FOR EVERYTHING IN THIS SHOP.

THAT'S OKAY, THEN. BECAUSE THEY'RE FAKE.

WHAT D'YOU MEAN, FAKE?

JUST THAT. THE REAL CHASFAN RELICS NEVER LEFT THE PLANET.

FOR AN INNOCENT MAN, QUENNA COULD DO A PRETTY GOOD IMPRESSION OF BLIND PANIC.

THAT LOUSY CHISELLER! I THOUGHT HE WAS TOO EAGER TO SHIFT IT!





THAT'S ALL HE BROUGHT ME.  
SEE FOR YOURSELF. IF THEY  
ARE FAKES, I'LL ...

IT'S SIMPLE  
ENOUGH TO CHECK.

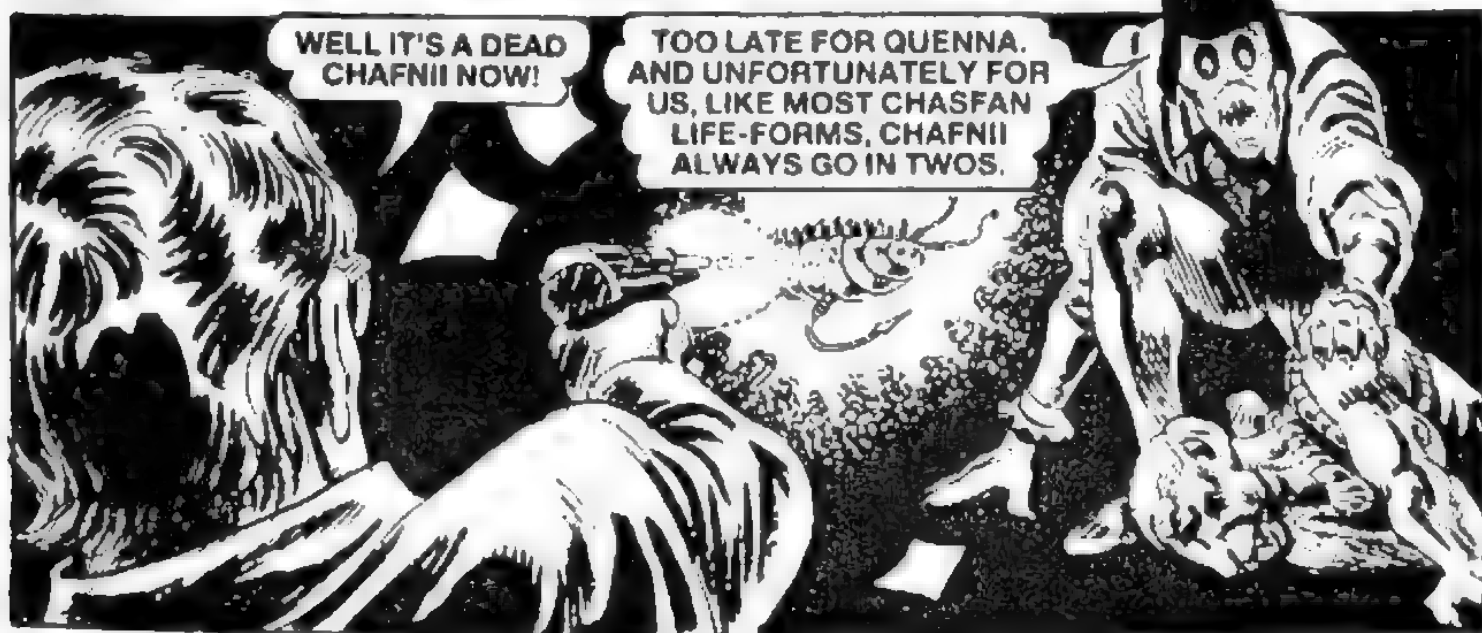
LITTLE HAPPENED WHEN ORFA'MM  
PICKED UP A RELIC.

I FEEL A SLIGHT THRILL IN  
MY PLEASURE-CENTRES!  
PROBABLY A BUILT-IN LOW-  
CURRENT EXCITER  
CIRCUIT, BUT NOTHING  
LIKE I FELT ON CHASFAN.  
THESE ARE DEFINITELY  
FAKES, MIKAL KAYN.



WHAT'S GOING ON, KAYN?  
AND HOW'D THAT GOOK  
KNOW JUST BY TOUCHING?

NATURAL TALENT, QUENNA.  
NOW — WHO BROUGHT THE  
MERCHANDISE IN?







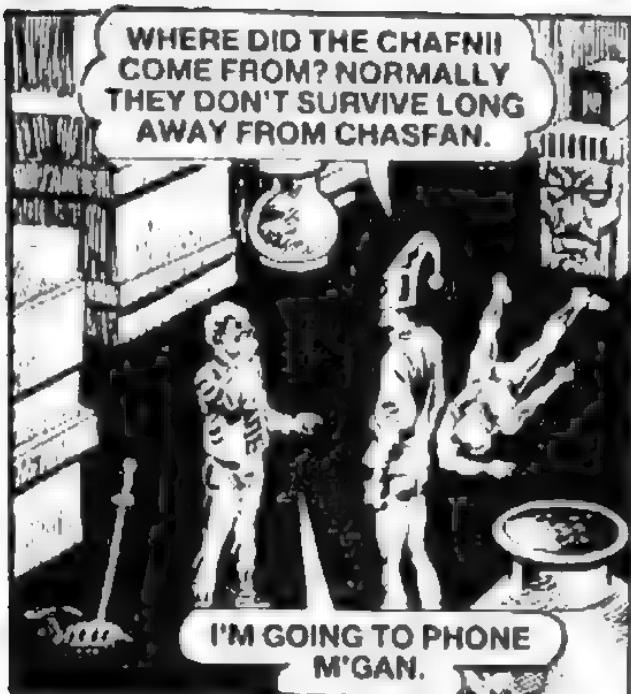
THE SHOT WAS TOO FAST AND PANICKY,  
AND ALL I MANAGED TO DO WAS MAKE  
THE THING LOSE ITS TEMPER.



BUT MY LUCK HADN'T ALL RUN OUT.

I CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO  
BE HARMED, MIKAL KAYN!





WITHIN MINUTES, THE PLACE WAS CRAWLING WITH M'GAN'S GOONS.



ANY DANGER OF YOU TELLING THE POLICE DEPARTMENT WHAT'S GOING ON, KAYN?

SOON, MCGANN — I PROMISE. WHERE'S WATHAN?

THE SERGEANT'S OUT INVESTIGATING THE UNIVERSITY THEFT — THINKS HE'S ON TO SOMETHING.



THANKS, LIEUTENANT — I'LL BE IN TOUCH.



I DIDN'T LIKE TO KEEP M'GAN IN THE DARK — LIKE I SAID, HE WAS STRAIGHT. SOMETIMES I THINK HE WAS TOO STRAIGHT.





IF MURDER WERE A  
DISEASE, KAYN —  
YOU'D BE A CARRIER.

WELL, MIKAL KAYN,  
YOU SEEM TO HAVE  
USED UP YOUR LAST  
LEAD.

NOT YET, ORFA'MM. WE'VE  
STILL TO TALK TO LIGNAZ  
GROSSE HIMSELF.

AND THAT'S GOING TO BE A SIGHT  
HARDER THAN ANYTHING WE'VE  
TRIED SO FAR!

ONCE AGAIN BACK AT MY OFFICE, I KITTED ORFA'MM AND MYSELF OUT WITH MORE WEAPONRY THAN I'D EVER USED IN MY LIFE.

IS ALL THIS NECESSARY?

YOU BET YOUR CREDIT-RATING! GROSSE LIKES HIS PRIVACY!

WE LIFTED OFF, AND I HEADED THE SHIP TOWARDS ONE OF THE MOST INHOSPITABLE PARTS OF THE WORLD — ASIDE FROM GROSSE'S MANSION, THAT IS.

GROSSE LIKES TO MAKE HIMSELF A HARD MAN TO SEE?

AND HOW! YOU NEED AN APPOINTMENT TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT — AND HIS LINE'S ALWAYS BUSY.

YOU SAID A WHILE AGO THAT YOU HAVE SOME UNSETTLED BUSINESS WITH GROSSE?

YEAH. IT WAS WAY BACK — BEFORE MY ACCIDENT, WHEN I STILL WORKED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ...

I'D BEEN AFTER GROSSE FOR TAX-EVASION, AND FINALLY COLLARED HIM ON ASHKELON, WHERE HE'D BOUGHT HIMSELF A RETREAT, DEEP INSIDE THE CRYSTAL FOREST ...

FACE TO FACE AT LAST, EH, KAYN? I MUST SAY, YOU'RE YOUNGER THAN I HAD IMAGINED.


GROSSE... IT'S TAX EVASION YOU'RE UP FOR, PUT THAT BLASTER AWAY.







IT WAS ONLY A  
FEW MILLION!



THE LAW'S THE  
LAW, GROSSE — IT  
DOESN'T MAKE  
EXCEPTIONS.

THEN I'M AFRAID I HAVE  
NO CHOICE, KAYN.

HE CRACKED HIS WHIP, AND THE CRYSTAL TREE  
NEXT TO ME SHATTERED —



AAARGHHHH!!!

SUCH A PITY!  
SO YOUNG.

I LOST A LOT OF BLOOD, BUT  
SURVIVED. GROSSE WAS  
PREPARED TO KILL FOR A MINOR  
CRIME — WHAT WOULD HE DO  
FOR A MAJOR CRIME?

I OWE LIGNAZ  
GROSSE PLENTY!



I HATE TO BREAK INTO YOUR REVERIE LIKE THIS — BUT HAS EITHER OF YOU NOTICED THE MISSILE PRESENTLY ON COLLISION COURSE WITH US?

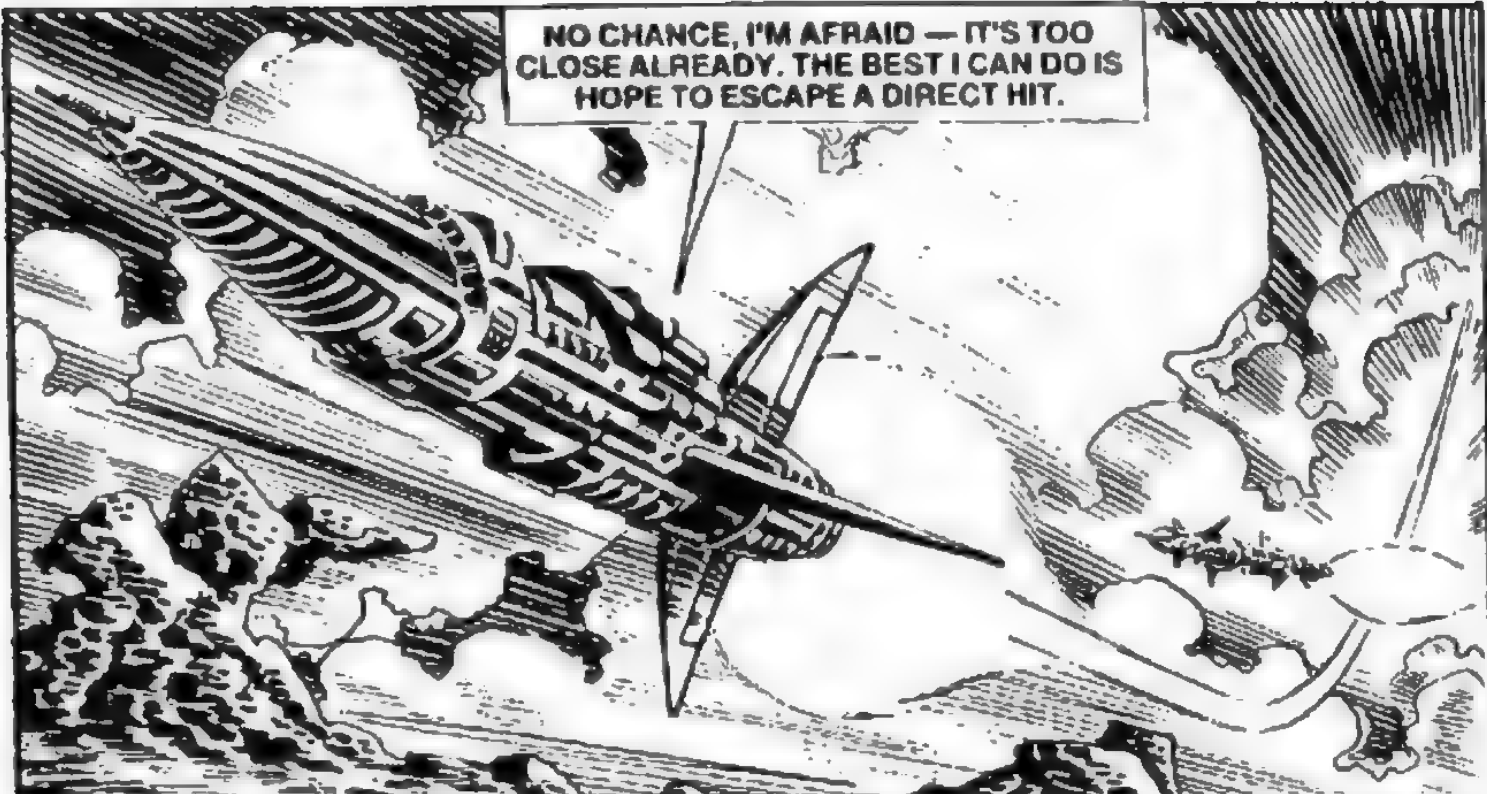
WHAT? PUT IT ON THE SCREEN!



IS IT FROM GROSSE'S MANSION?

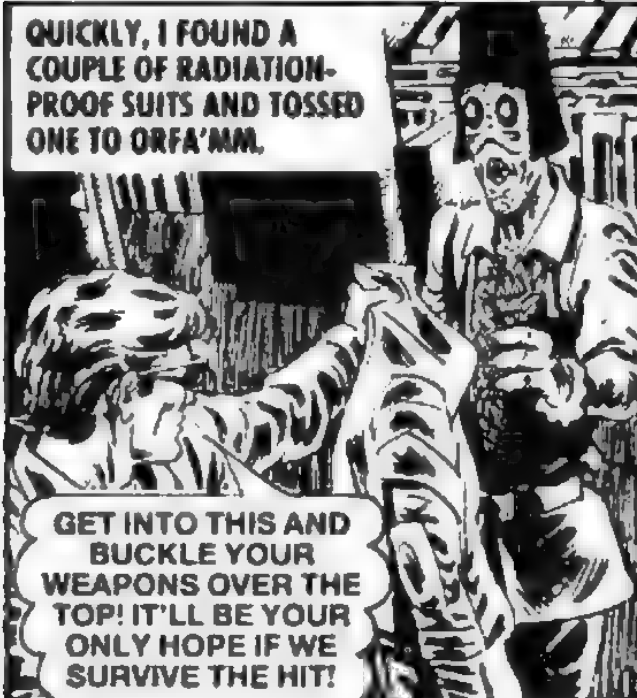
NO — FROM THE NORTH! OUR INVISIBLE ENEMY'S AT IT AGAIN! COMPUTER — CAN YOU LOSE IT?






NO CHANCE, I'M AFRAID — IT'S TOO CLOSE ALREADY. THE BEST I CAN DO IS HOPE TO ESCAPE A DIRECT HIT.

NOT GOOD NEWS — EVEN IF WE SURVIVED THE EXPLOSION, BELOW US WAS A RADIOACTIVE WASTELAND LEFT OVER AFTER DECADES OF WEAPONS TESTING BY THE MILITARY.

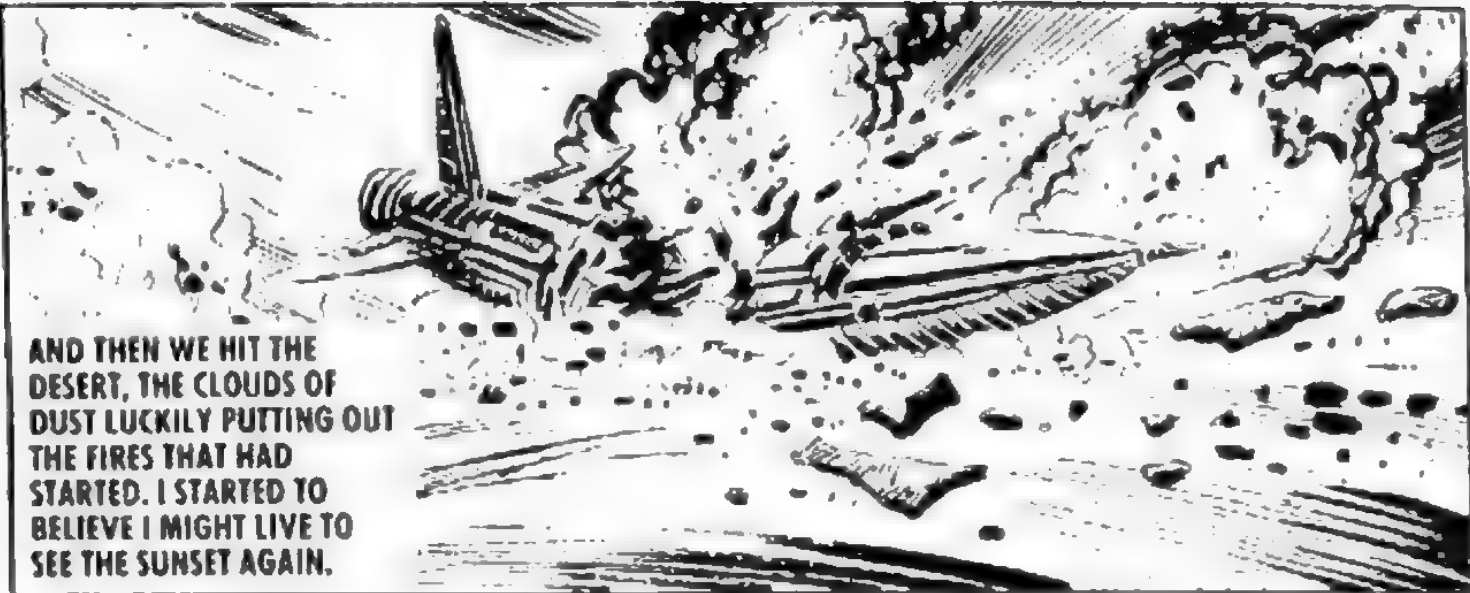


QUICKLY, I FOUND A COUPLE OF RADIATION-PROOF SUITS AND TOSSED ONE TO ORFA'MM.


GET INTO THIS AND BUCKLE YOUR WEAPONS OVER THE TOP! IT'LL BE YOUR ONLY HOPE IF WE SURVIVE THE HIT!



THE MISSILE STRUCK OUR PORT SIDE, BLOWING OUT GREAT CHUNKS OF MY POOR OLD SHIP — AND FOR A MOMENT, ALL I COULD THINK WAS HOW I WOULD EVER AFFORD ANOTHER — I WASN'T INSURED.




AND THEN WE HIT THE  
DESERT, THE CLOUDS OF  
DUST LUCKILY PUTTING OUT  
THE FIRES THAT HAD  
STARTED. I STARTED TO  
BELIEVE I MIGHT LIVE TO  
SEE THE SUNSET AGAIN.




WELL, ANY LANDING YOU  
CAN WALK AWAY FROM IS A  
GOOD ONE, AS WE USED TO  
SAY.

ALL VERY FINE FOR YOU,  
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO  
EXPERIENCE BEING BLOWN  
APART IN THE CRASH! I  
SUPPOSE YOU THINK I'VE  
NO FEELINGS?



GROSSE'S FORTRESS IS AT  
REF.020X27 — WHICH I MAKE  
OUT IS THAT WAY, ORFA'MM.  
BUT HOW FAR?

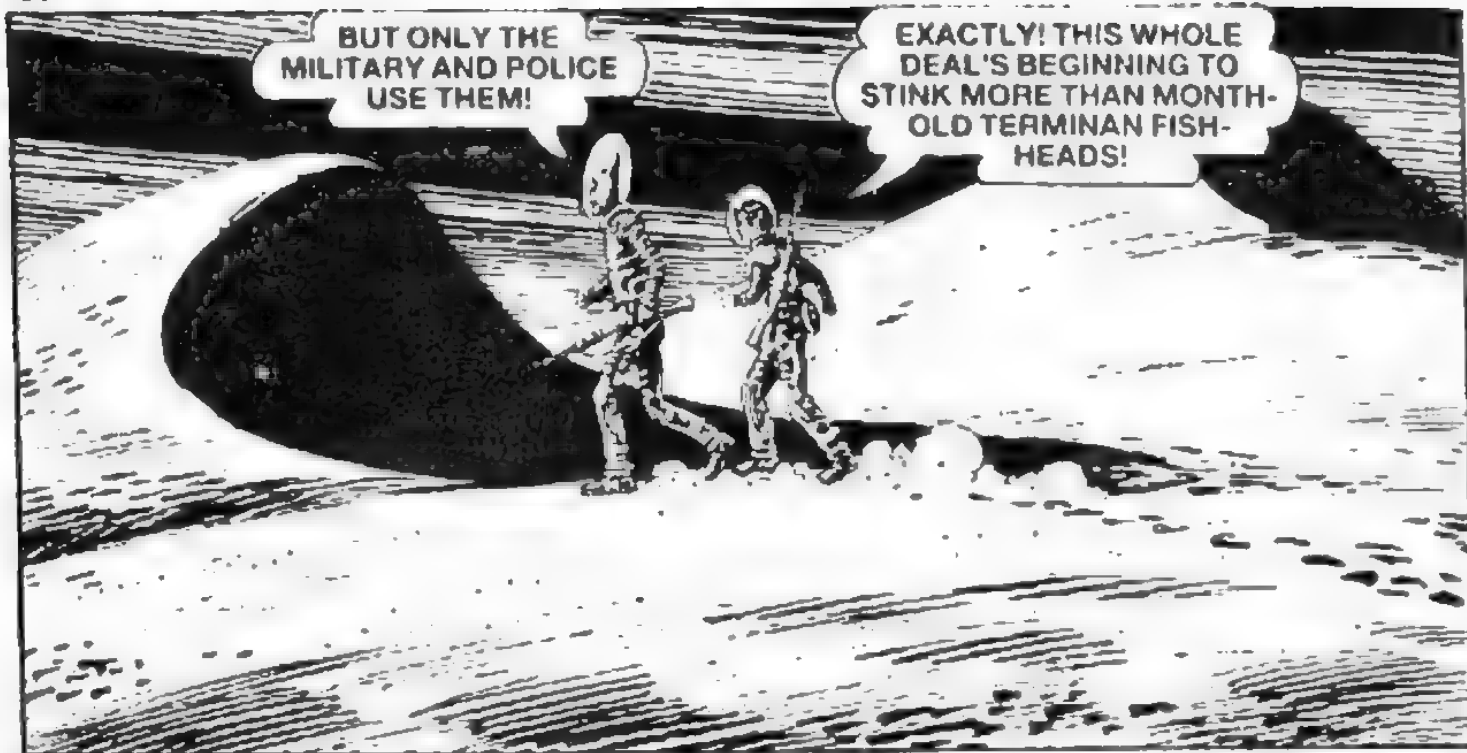
THAT WAS A GOOD  
QUESTION. TROUBLE WAS, I  
WAS ALL OUT OF GOOD  
ANSWERS.



I'M BEGINNING TO THINK  
SOMEONE DOESN'T LIKE US  
VERY MUCH.

YEAH — SOMEONE WITH  
ACCESS TO MISSILES.













... WE'RE AS HUMAN AS YOU ARE. WELL — AS HUMAN AS ONE OF YOU ANYWAY. NOW D'YOU MIND TELLING ME WHAT YOU'RE DOING OUT IN THIS FORSAKEN PATCH OF THE WORLD?

UNDER THE DIRT, THE GUY LOOKED PRETTY NORMAL TO ME — AND I BEGAN TO WONDER HOW.

WE WERE LED BACK TO A WELL-HIDDEN CAVE, AND GOT SOME SORT OF EXPLANATION ON THE WAY.

THERE'S PLENTY OF RADIATION ABOUT, BUT NONE OF IT'S ACTUALLY HARMFUL. THE MILITARY WILL NEVER ADMIT IT'S PERFECTED SUCH "CLEAN" NUCLEAR WEAPONRY, SO ALL THE TALES OF DEADLY WASTELAND PROWLLED BY HIDEOUS MUTIES SUIT THE BRASS-HATS JUST FINE. OF COURSE IT ALSO SUITS ALL THESE DESERTERS TOO.

AND LIGNAZ GROSSE.



SO YOU'RE AFTER GROSSE, EH? WELL, ME AND THE BOYS HAVE BEEN A THORN IN HIS SIDE FOR SOME TIME NOW BUT I DON'T SEE WHAT YOU TWO THINK YOU CAN DO ALONE.

LET'S JUST SAY I'M AN INCURABLE OPTIMIST.

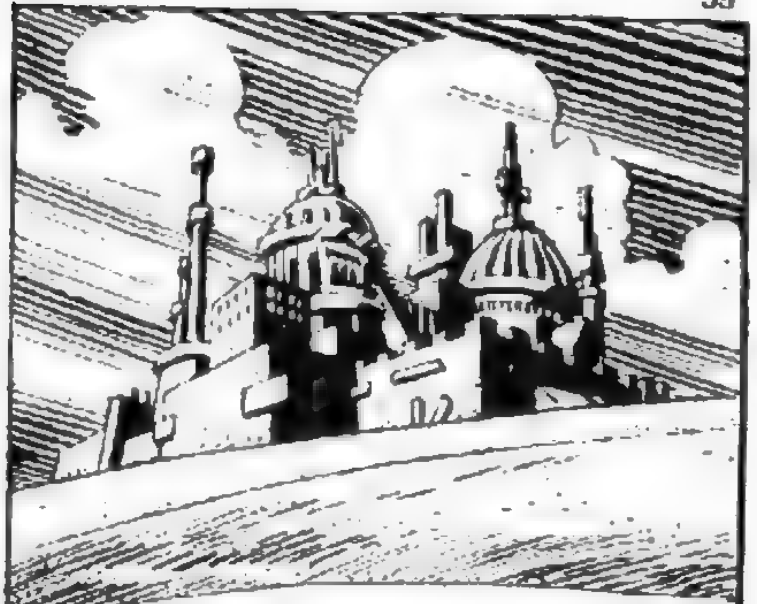
OKAY, KAYN — FIRST WE'LL EAT, AND THEN I THINK YOU AND ME NEED TO TALK MORE.

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME — ESPECIALLY THE EATING PART OF IT.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THE COLONIST, ETHAN WAIN TOOK US TO SEE GROSSE'S MANSION — A LOT NEARER THAN I'D THOUGHT.

... AND LIKE I SAID, EXCEPT FOR THAT CRUISER YESTERDAY, AND ANOTHER ONE A FEW DAYS EARLIER, NOTHING'S GONE IN OR OUT FOR MONTHS.

WHAT I FIGURED. SO — ARE WE AGREED?







BUT I NEEDN'T HAVE WORRIED.



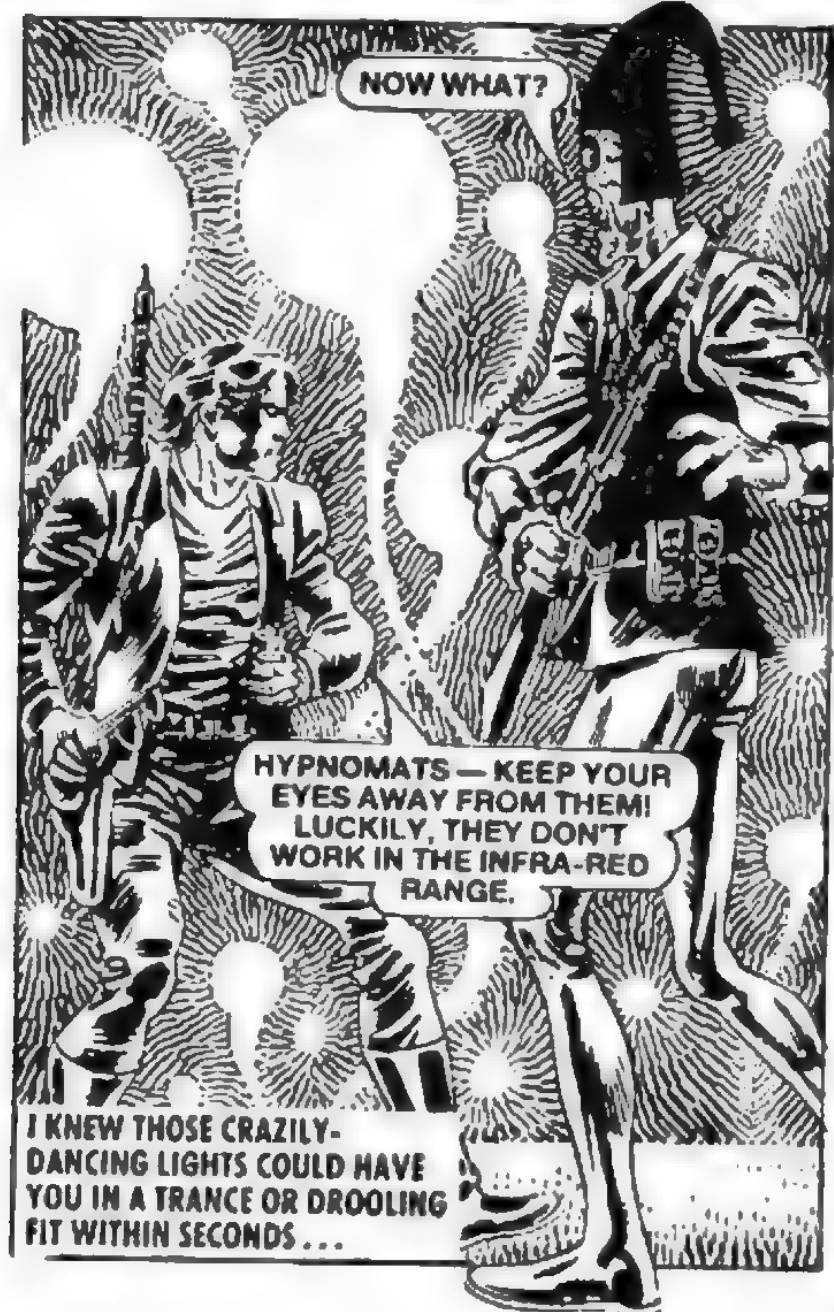


THE VAT-GROWN MUTIE DOGS KEPT COMING — BUT NONE GOT PAST OUR FIRE.

THIS IS TOO EASY!

ARE YOU KIDDING? THESE MUTTS ARE JUST TO SCARE OFF THE CURIOUS!

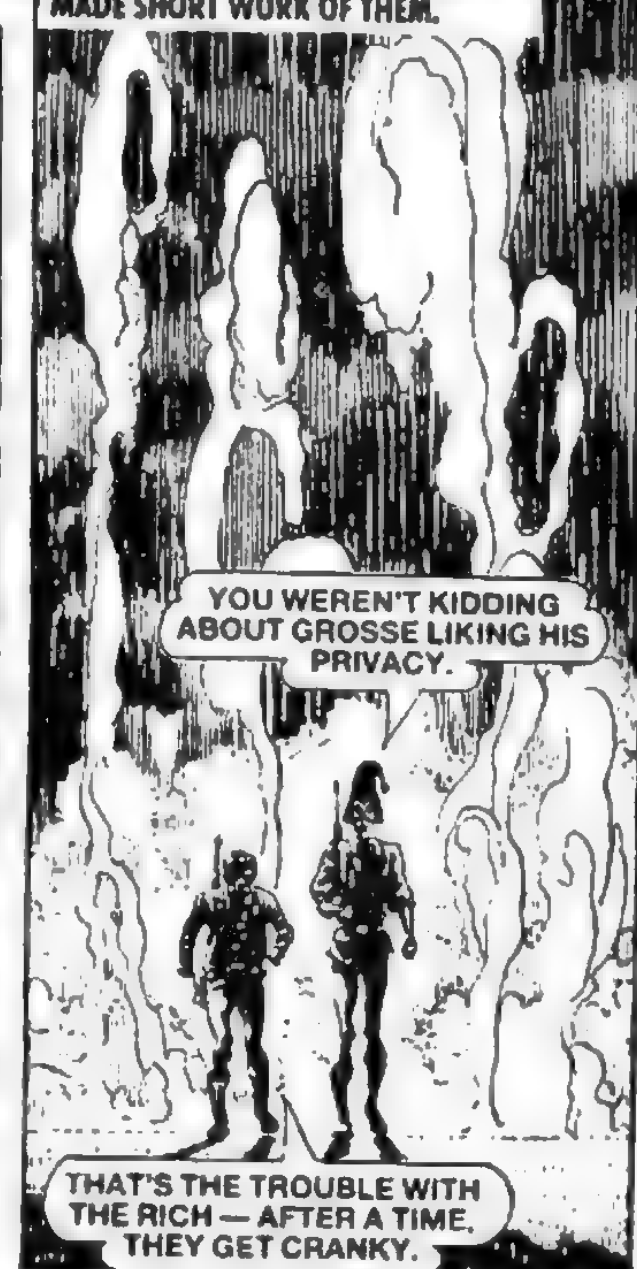
... BUT A FEW PLASTIQUE GRENADES MADE SHORT WORK OF THEM.



NOW WHAT?

HYPNOMATS — KEEP YOUR EYES AWAY FROM THEM! LUCKILY, THEY DON'T WORK IN THE INFRA-RED RANGE.

I KNEW THOSE CRAZILY-DANCING LIGHTS COULD HAVE YOU IN A TRANCE OR DROOLING FIT WITHIN SECONDS ...



YOU WEREN'T KIDDING ABOUT GROSSE LIKING HIS PRIVACY.

THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH THE RICH — AFTER A TIME, THEY GET CRANKY.





ONCE THE GUARDS  
WERE OCCUPIED,  
WE MADE OUR  
WAY INTO THE  
MANSION ITSELF.

YOU'RE GETTING VERY  
BRUTAL SUDDENLY.

LAUGH IF YOU MUST,  
MIKAL KAYN — BUT I  
HAVE A SUDDEN SENSE  
OF TERRIBLE  
URGENCY. ORI'MM IS  
CLOSE, AND IN  
DANGER!



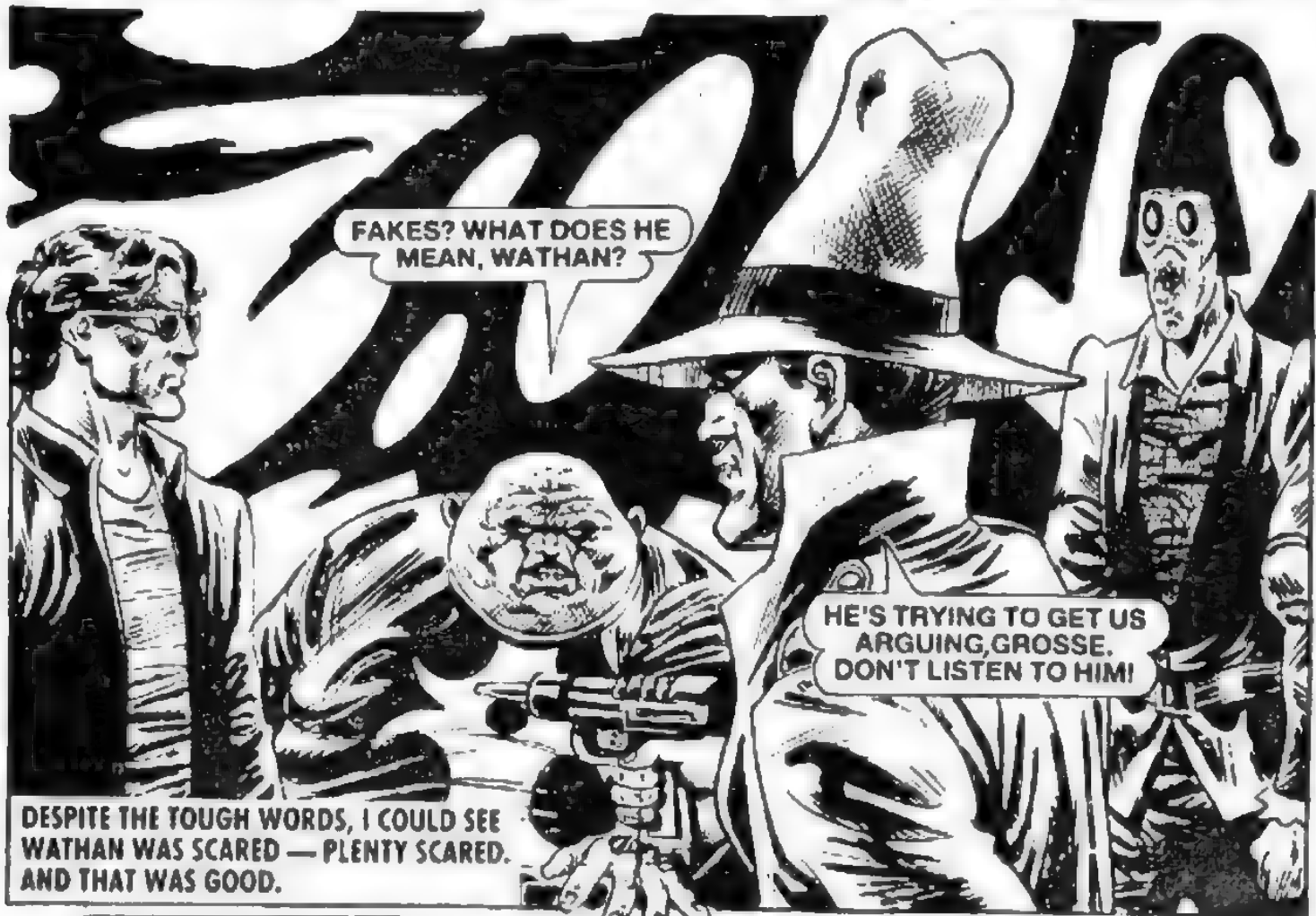
OKAY — YOU'RE  
CALLING THE SHOTS  
NOW! WHICH WAY?

STRAIGHT AHEAD!  
THOSE DOORS IN  
FRONT OF US.

BUT EVEN BEFORE WE REACHED WHATEVER  
LAY BEYOND, I HEARD THE DISTINCTIVE  
SOUND OF A POLICE-ISSUE PHASER.











BUT WHAT WATHAN DIDN'T KNOW AT THAT TIME WAS THAT THE RELICS WERE FAKES. THE DYADASSI ON CHASFAN HAD SUBSTITUTED THEM FOR THE REAL ONES BEFORE WATHAN LEFT THEIR PLANET. THAT WAY NO ONE WOULD EVER COME LOOKING FOR THE REAL RELICS AGAIN.

IT WASN'T UNTIL WATHAN WENT TO PICK UP THE STOLEN RELICS AT THE PRE-ARRANGED RENDEZVOUS WITH MORDEN AT YOUR APARTMENT, GROSSE, THAT HE FOUND OUT ...



WHAT D'YOU MEAN FAKE! YOU TRYING TO PULL SOMETHING MORDEN?

NOT ME — ORI'MM CHECKED THEM. HE SAYS THEY'RE FORGERIES. SOMEONE'S MADE A FOOL OF YOU, WATHAN. NOW I'M GONNA TELL GROSSE.













**DON'T  
MISS**

**THIS MONTH'S OTHER  
ACTION-PACKED  
ADVENTURE**

# STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No. 248

**30p**



**THE  
FREEDOM  
FIGHTERS**

**NOW ON SALE**



## KAYN'S QUEST

Hi! I'm Kayn, Mikal R.  
Private investigation is  
my line and trouble is  
my constant  
companion. What  
would you do if some  
weirdo from a strange  
planet asked you to  
take on a job for the  
price of a cup of  
coffee? You're right —  
show him the door!  
But I didn't, and now  
trouble doesn't start to  
describe the spot I'm  
in . . .

